

Recycling and Refuse Management Committee
Minutes from 1/21/10 meeting, 4:30 pm

Present: Meg Vickery, Chair; Susan Waite, DPW Liaison; Sterling Bush; Greg Keochakian; John Root

November 5, 2009 minutes approved without changes.

Susan opened the meeting with a question regarding this committee's involvement in the April 24, 2010 Sustainability Festival. The downtown event is a collaboration of the Town's Energy Task Force/Renewable Energy Fair, the Shade Tree Committee, the Chamber of Commerce, and DPW Solid Waste Division. The Festival will stretch from Kendrick Park to the Common. Susan will meet with local merchants to encourage their involvement. Will the RRMC maintain a booth for the Festival as it has at the Renewable Energy Fair in the past? This Committee is in agreement that we should have a booth to distribute information and make efforts to recruit new members to our Committee.

Demonstrations of worm composting, rain barrel distribution and information regarding composting options were suggested. The Committee agreed that the benefits of a large sustainability festival would attract and inform larger groups and would reduce duplication of effort. Promotion could include non-permanent (chalk) stenciled designs on the sidewalks of downtown indicating which businesses have joined in the effort.

Styrofoam Packaging Topic:

The lawyer found a recent ordinance for a polystyrene ban from Marin County, CA, which is helpful in formulating ours. He suggests that we mimic their inclusion of an explanation of why the ban is important. Susan provided copies of a draft she wrote and asked for feedback from committee members at or before the February meeting.

Membership Recruitment Action Plan:

Efforts will be made to secure new membership through advertising at the Sustainability Festival, Craigslist, Freecycle, ACTV slides as well as through word of mouth at the Transfer Station where there is thought to be a number of potential candidates.

Future Waste Disposal Options:

This topic was introduced in December at an informal meeting of the RRMC with Guilford Mooring in attendance. The Committee was asked if they would like a role in the process of determining what Amherst will do with its waste in the future. Gathering information which will enable Mr. Mooring to provide a recommendation on how best to handle and dispose of Amherst's household waste. In the future, nearby landfills will close forcing Amherst to redesign its handling and/or processing of its solid waste. Discussion over a specific role for this Committee was at hand. Research and site visits are necessary aspects in aiding in the process of determination. Sterling added that attention to compliance issues is in order as a precursor to this determination. Susan provided handouts with a variety of information on sustainability when pursuing waste management. This was meant to be food for thought and as a stimulation of further researched-based discussion. Susan proposed that we, as a committee, join in actively discussing these topics as a response to Mr. Mooring's request for input. All Committee members in attendance were in agreement with this proposal and wish to participate collectively in this exercise. It was suggested that a subcommittee of members be formed to work on this project.

Transfer Station Pricing Changes:

Transfer Station sticker prices will increase as of April 1. Susan will confirm the pricing strategy and will bring this information to the next meeting. Transfer Station expenses have risen and in order to break even the costs will be passed on to consumers.

New information:

Research into whether the DPW would pick up event waste on the common is still being discussed and Mr. Mooring's input is needed to understand the complexities of this issue.

Susan will be speaking with the superintendant of schools to discuss solid waste programs in the schools.

Sterling highlights information from Massachusetts DEP: "Guidance for solid waste handling and disposal facilities on compliance with Mass. DEP's waste bans." Sterling suggests that this town may not be in compliance with certain regulations and is requesting a review of pertinent compliance criteria.

Hospice Shop gift certificates from 2009 were distributed to Mercy House volunteers who handled waste removal at the Taste of Amherst.

Meeting adjourned 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Keochakian